The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news summaries and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and reports the latest information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1710 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 3

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

The outcome of the Russian-Polish border dispute will afford the world an interesting preview on how the peace is to be fashioned—on the basis of justice or a la Munich.

Some people may say this dispute is none of our business and that labor should not get mixed up in it. We differ from that view. We feel very strongly that labor should get mixed up in it and every other issue. For if we knuckle down to force or the threat of force now, in the first postwar decision that faces us, we are going to help make the final peace conference an international grab bag in which every nation which is strong will be able to make out a case for the seizure of territory from countries which are weak. That's the way to guarantee future wars. If American labor is determined that wars shall be outlawed, it must do its part to suppress international outlawry at the very outset.

The terms Russia has offered Poland have been described by some writers as unbalanced. That's a mild and technical phrase for dictation. In other words, Russia has not offered to sit down with the Polish Government-in-exile and talk things over in an effort to come to an amicable agreement. On the contrary, the Soviet Government has announced its terms without waiting to hear from the Poles. In fact, Russia apparently will refuse to recognize the Polish Government-in-exile.

Was Stalin's Face Red?

It will be recalled that the exiled Polish Government interested itself in the Erlich-Alter case, much to the embarrassment of the Stalin regime. The two Polish labor leaders were executed secretly by the Russians while the Stalin-Hitler pact was still in effect and shortly after the Soviet armies had collaborated with Hitler's troops in putting the double squeeze on Poland. Moscow at first explained that Erlich and Alter had been sentenced to death on the alleged charge of aiding Hitler. But the labor leaders, as the world knew, were bitter enemies of everything Hitler stands for. And at the very time they were executed Russia was aiding Hitler. So it became obvious that the real offense of Erlich and Alter was in resisting Hitler at a time when Stalin was playing along with him.

These disclosures put the Soviet Government in a bad light. Since the Polish Government-in-exile had interceded in behalf of two of its most prominent citizens, and thereby attracted attention to the case, we can well understand how Stalin and his followers would be inclined to regard that government as hostile.

Of course, the Russians would rather recognize and deal with a more subservient Polish group, preferably one made up of Polish Communists who would cheerfully sacrifice the interests of their own country to what Stalin might think was best for the interests of the world's citadel of Communism.

America and Britain can't let Russia get away with that.

Our Debt To Poland

We admit the diplomatic questions involved are delicate. Russia has very materially helped us in the winning of this war. Her armies have now driven the Nazis out of most of Russia and are now pouring into Poland in great strength. Our diplomats may be inclined to let Stalin have his way on the ground that possession is nine points of the law.

But once at the risk of offending an important ally, we think the time has come to serve notice on Stalin or anyone else that postwar territorial settlements cannot be settled on a unilateral basis and that the United Nations as a whole must make the final decision, to which all parties must agree to subscribe. And these final decisions must be determined on the basis of justice, without respect to possession, power or high-pressure politics.

Where justice lies in the dispute between Poland and Russia we do not attempt to assert. That is a matter for careful study and appraisal. What we do know is that Russia is entitled to a large slice of Eastern Poland because Hitler helped her grab it. We also know that Russia's attempted justification of the grab on ethnological grounds is dangerously similar to Hitler's pretext for the seizure of the Sudetenland from Czecho-Slovakia.

The Polish people possess a fierce patriotism. They made just as gallant a defense of their land as did Russia. They were defeated partly because they were no military match for the Nazis and partly because they were attacked in the rear by Russia. But the fact remains that the Poles were the first to fight back against Hitler and against terrible odds. The United Nations owe Poland a lot. Simple justice is the least we can render in payment.

Pressmen Re-Elect All Officials; Berry Lauds Arbitration Contract

Pressmen's Home, Tenn. — Re-election of officials of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America was announced following a referendum in which approximately 9000 local unions in the United States and the Dominion of Canada participated.

Those nominated for office, who were without opposition and therefore are automatically declared elected for a four-year period, are George L. Berry, Pressmen's Home, Tenn., president; Hugh H. McHugh, Indianapolis, vice president; F. W. Maxted, Hamilton, Ontario, Can., vice president; J. H. de Rose, San Francisco, vice president; Jacob B. Bosone, Minneapolis, vice president; Joseph C. Ely, Pressmen's Home, Tenn., secretary-treasurer; Otto Huber, Denver, home trustee; E. Curtis White, Indianapolis, school trustee; Anthony J. DeAndrade, Boston, school trustee; and Louis A. Lepre, Washington, D. C., school trustee.

President Berry, commenting upon the result, said:

"Of course the unanimous re-election of my associates and myself to office in the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America is complimentary, and is heart-ing, and significant, but it seems to me the important fact is that the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America is reaffirmed in its basic policy of peaceful and constructive relationship as between its members and management in the newspaper, publication, commercial printing, and specialty fields of the craft.

"The record manifests that through the instrumentality of our International Arbitration Board we have maintained peace, and through peace we have found economic justice. This record prior to the War Labor Board, and it followed during the period of peace; and it is functioning during the present world conflict and will continue to respond when this war is over. The result of thirty-six years of testing the practicabilities of the relationship that maintains peace and the machinery for the settlement of differences as between management and ourselves is proof positive of the practicabilities of this system.

"It seems to me if we are to save America from the more violent effects of the post-war period, we must all come to understand the inescapable community of interest which exists as between the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America in complimentary, and of course will come a stable economic adjustment."

"JUSTICE" CELEBRATES ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

New York, N. Y.—January 18 marked the 25th anniversary of the first publication of "Justice," official newspaper of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. It also marked 25 years in which Max D. Danish has served as editor of "Justice." The two events were celebrated by a luncheon, under the auspices of the ILGWU at the Tower Club Rooms of the Park Central Hotel, attended by many notables of the labor movement.

DETROIT AFL UNIONS AID TEACHERS CAMPAIGN FUND

Detroit, Mich. — An organization fund of $5,000 was unanimously guaranteed to the Detroit Federation of Teachers (AFL) by the other AFL organizations in the city through the Detroit and Wayne County Federation of Labor. The central body advanced $1,500 and the affiliated locals will make up the rest.

The teachers have bettered their wages and working conditions not only in Detroit but throughout the metropolitan area in the last nine years. In Highland Park they powered a drive last spring to increase the school tax by referendum vote, which the taxpayers adopted by a large majority. Under teacher representation now get respectful hearing from boards of education and city councils.

RAILROAD REVENUES RISE; SHARE OF EMPLOYES FALLS

Washington, D. C.—The Interstate Commerce Commission provided new ammunition for the railroad unions in their fight for higher wages by reporting railroad revenues had risen to a new high in 1943 while the proportionate share of railroad income paid to employes had decreased.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, 1943, the I. C. C. said, the railroads' net income after taxes was $2,927,000,000 greater than in the calendar year 1940, or almost twice as great as the prior year. However, the roads' employes who received 58.56 per cent of the 1940 net income in the form of wages and salaries received only 52 per cent in 1943, while the investors' share rose from 31.46 per cent to 38 per cent.

AFL Council Urges Subsidy Program; Asks FDR To Restore WLB's Powers

Miami, Fla.—Launching its mid-winter session here, the AFL Executive Council issued an urgent call to Congress to enact a billion-dollar food price subsidy program and at the same time insisted that President Roosevelt restore to the War Labor Board full authority over wage disputes.

These two recommendations form the nucleus of the Federation's program for establishing the nation's war economy on a sound and workable basis.

Following the Council's opening session, AFL President William Green revealed that President Roosevelt had personally appealed to him for help in persuading Congress to renew authorization for food subsidies.

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The terms Russia has offered Poland have been described by some writers as unbalanced. That's a mild and technical phrase for dictation. In other words, Russia has not offered to sit down with the Polish Government-in-exile and talk things over in an effort to come to an amicable agreement. On the contrary, the Soviet Government has announced its terms without waiting to hear from the Poles. In fact, Russia apparently will refuse to recognize the Polish Government-in-exile.

Mr. Green said, "The subsidy program is necessary to hold down food prices for the necessities of life under control and to assure increased food production.

"It should also be evident by now that wages cannot be stabilized unless the cost of living is controlled.

"In conformity with the Council's decision, I call upon all members of the American Federation of Labor to write or wire their Representatives in the Congress urging them to support the authorization of the President's subsidy program."

The fight over subsidy legislation is scheduled to come up soon on the Senate floor. The House already has voted to kill all food subsidies, so the Senate battle promises to be the key test.

After a two-hour discussion of the emergency question, the Executive Council took up consideration of the functions of the War Labor Board. Mr. Green revealed that in the last few days Economic Stabilization Director Fred M. Vinson had voiced stiff opposition to decisions in aircraft cases by the WLB.

"We object to the exercise of such veto power by Mr. Vinson or by War Mobilization Director Byrnes," Mr. Green declared. "The Council directed that the whole matter be brought directly to the attention of President Roosevelt with the demand that the independent authority of the War Labor Board be fully restored.

"The War Labor Board must be the final authority on all wage questions. For it is our unions spend a great deal of time and effort in presenting cases before the WLB and the body gives careful and lengthy consideration to the facts and evidence before rendering decisions, only to have its findings upset by Mr. Vinson who knows nothing about the merits of the case. If that is going to be the practice, we might just as well skip the War Labor Board in the first place and present our case directly to Mr. Vinson, but we believe that the War Labor Board is the only agency properly clothed with authority to handle and decide wage disputes and we will insist that its powers to make final decisions be restored."

Mr. Green said he expected that in the next 20 days the Council will review many other legislative, economic, political, international and postwar problems.

FDR's "Second Bill of Rights"

Washington, D. C.—In his annual message to Congress, President Roosevelt outlined what he termed a "Bill of Rights" for the postwar security of the American people. It follows:

"In our day these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident. We have come to realize that, as a nation, a basic bill of rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all—regardless of station, race or creed.

"Among these are:

"The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;

"The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;

"The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;

"The right of every business man, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad;

"The right of every family to a decent home;

"The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;

"The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment;

"The right to a good education;

"All of these rights spell security. And after this war is won we must be prepared to move forward, in the implementation of these rights, to new goals of human happiness and well-being."

Shishkin Cites Full Employment, Real Democracy, As Postwar Goals

Washington, D. C.—Work for all at fair pay, a living democracy, and opportunity for material and spiritual growth for everyone were set up as broad objectives by Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, on the "America Tomorrow" Radio Forum sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of U.S.A. over the Blue Network. Discussing the subject, "What Should Be the Relationship of Private Business and Government in the Postwar Economy," Mr. Shishkin said:

"Work—stable jobs at fair pay for the mass of our people—comes ahead of profits. Government's job is to help out stable and expanding incomes whose buying power would sustain a private economy operating at near-to not avoid chronic unemployment. Our only postwar frontier for economic expansion is the frontier of steady improvement in the real income and the standard of living of the people. Expansion in the form of investment and expansion of mass income are complementary interests. One cannot be accomplished without the other.

"The postwar function of the government to achieve expansion is threefold. One is to help launch the expansion of investment, business activity and employment right after the war, to help convert and set up our national household as a going peacetime concern. Second, is to set up devices to make sure that expansion is steady and balanced, to guard against collapse or explosion. A comprehensive system of social security is the most important single device to accomplish this. Public works when needed, and only when needed, to supplement private investment is also such a complementary device. Fiscal and tax policy acting as a balance wheel, is compensator, is another means of assuring balanced economic progress. Third, is the government's responsibility to clean up the basement of our national household; to help clean up slums, wipe out disease, rehabilitate those whom fortune has pushed into dark and stagnant corners of the economy. If those out of reach of private business and private investment are brought within their reach, the growth of private enterprise will be enhanced, not threatened, even though the initial steps of rehabilitation is taken by community through government aid."

30,207 Apprentice Training Plans Available For Returned Veterans

Washington, D. C.—Virtually all of the 30,207 apprentice training programs in the United States extend opportunities to returning veterans, Chairman George M. Moscrip of War Manpower Commission told the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship. The committee is the policy-forming body of the national apprenticeship program now being carried out by the Apprentice-Training Service of WMC.

This will provide an excellent method for assisting veterans, especially the younger men, to adjust themselves in the postwar period," Mr. McNutt said. "A man employed as an apprentice not only has a steady job, but an assurance of training which will prepare him for advancement.

"Moreover, as the returning veteran has been invited to enter apprentice-ship and obtain training for skilled work, age restrictions and other limitations have been especially lifted for him in many apprenticeship standards."

Mr. McNutt also congratulated the committee for extending training opportunities to older men in industry and to handicapped workers.

The Federal Committee on Apprenticeship is composed of two representatives each from management, labor and Government. Present members are William L. Batt, president of S.K.F. Industries, Inc.; Channing R. Dooley, manager of industrial relations, Socony-Vacuum Oil Co.; John P. Frey, president, Metal Trades Department, American Federation of Labor; Clinton S. Golden, assistant to the president, Steel Workers Organizing Committee; Clara M. Beyer, assistant director, Division of Labor Standards, U. S. Department of Labor; and Layton S. Hawkins, chief, Trade and Industrial Education, U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency.

AFL Spurns 'Draft Labor' Plan, Urges Congress To Defeat It

Text of President Green's Statement

Text of AFL President William Green's statement on the proposal for a National Service Act follows:

In giving consideration to the recommendation made by President Roosevelt in his message to Congress for the enactment of a National Service Law, we must take into account whether there is any need for such legislation, what its effect will be on the morale and efficiency of workers and whether it will impair vital democratic rights.

The American Federation of Labor has been unwilling to extend approval to compulsory service legislation because we are thoroughly convinced that the maximum of industrial efficiency involves free, willing and voluntary cooperation in the war effort is bound to be disastrous in its effects.

The record shows that free labor in free America is more efficient and capable of greater individual and collective production than forced labor employed in totalitarian countries. The record shows that free labor in America has accomplished miracles of production. Why endanger the high efficiency of production we have achieved? It is the question Congress must answer when it considers the President's proposals.

We are all agreed that strikes should not occur during the war emergency and that it is our sincere duty to prevent them. Immediately after Pearl Harbor the American Federation of Labor gave a no-strike pledge to the President of the United States. As president of the American Federation of Labor, I have never since then ordered a single strike or approved or condoned one. The record shows that not a single national strike has been put into effect by a union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor since Pearl Harbor. When local strikes have occurred, we have promptly exerted every influence to terminate them as quickly as possible. That is the official policy of the American Federation of Labor.

Great Britain has a National Service Act. It has failed to prevent strikes in that country. Factual comparisons show that there were more strikes, proportionately, in Great Britain than in the United States in 1943.

Great Britain has a National Service Act. It has failed to prevent sabotage. Incendiarism and other destructive acts against war industries, presumably executed when the Nazis cannot find the actual perpetrators of alleged sabotage. Innocent people are punished when the guilty cannot be apprehended. This is a practice which Hitler has developed and encouraged in the occupied countries. Yet the same principle could be applied here through enactment of a national service law. The millions of workers who have never gone on strike during the war would resent those who have served notice that in the war production plants of the nation during long hours and extra shifts, would be punished by conscription and the stigma of involuntary servitude merely because a small percentage of workers had engaged in unauthorized and illegal strikes.

Summing up, the American Federation of Labor resolutely opposes enactment of compulsory National Service legislation for the following major reasons:

1—It will not prevent strikes. The experience of Great Britain proves that. Britain has a national service law. It has not stopped strikes. In 1942 the number of strikes in Britain was greater proportionately than in the United States.

2—It will not solve manpower problems. The War Manpower Commission's Policy Committee, composed of management, labor and agricultural representatives, declared unanimously only two months ago that "the American people will overcome the present manpower shortage under a voluntary system than under one of compulsion and regimentation.

3—It threatens to undermine our basic concepts of democracy. There is no real comparison between men for service in the armed forces of the country and drafting them for service in private industry, operating for private profit. As eminent an authority as Mr. Bernard Baruch has publicly warned against this.

Roosevelt's Five-Point Program

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt's proposal for a National Service Act was included in a five-point program which he described as a "just and equitable whole." Text of the program follows:

"I recommend that the Congress adopt:

"1. A realistic tax law—which will take all unreasonable profits, both individual and corporate, and reduce the ultimate cost of the war to our sons and daughters. This must be met now under consideration by the Congress does not begin to meet this test.

"2. A continuation of the law for the renegotiation of war contracts—which will prevent unwarranted profits at the expense of the government. For two long years I have pleaded with the Congress to close undue profits out of war.

"3. A law—which will enable the government (a) to place a reasonable floor under the prices the farmer may expect for his production; and (b) to place a ceiling on the prices a consumer will have to pay for food. The cost of food formed the principal argument for the laws that require public funds to carry out. It will cost in appropriations about 1 per cent of the present annual cost of the war.

"4. Early amendment of the social security statute of October, 1942. This expires June 30, 1944, and if it is not extended well in advance the country might just as well expect price chaos by summer. We cannot have stabilization by wishful thinking. We must take positive action to maintain the integrity of the American dollar.

"5. A national service law—which, for the duration of the war, will prevent strikes and, with certain exceptions, will make available for war production or for any other essential services every able-bodied adult in this nation.

"These five measures together form a just and equitable whole. I would not recommend a national service law unless the other laws were passed to keep down the cost of living, to share equitably the burdens of taxation, to hold the stabilization line, and to prevent undue profits."

750,000 Paid $155,000,000 Pensions Under Social Security Act In 1943

New York City.—Payments under the old-age and survivors insurance system in 1943 in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, newly consolidated into a social security area, totaled $155,000,000, it was announced by Arthur J. Altmeyer, commissioner, reported.

The number of beneficiaries was slightly more than 28 per cent of the 750,000 pensioners in the nation receiving benefits under the Social Security Act. About 214,000 men, women and children in the region will get increases effective for December in the next few days.

In New York State 100,000 beneficiaries received $22,400,000 in 1943, divided as follows: retired workers, $13,000,000; wives of retired workers, $2,000,000; children of retired workers, $3,500,000; young widows with children, $2,500,000; widows 65 years or over, $1,500,000; aged dependent parents, $100,000. The number of beneficiaries in the state increased 21,000 during the year.

"The Federal family insurance program," Mr. Altmeyer said in his address, "has become one of the vital social and financial forces of the nation, holding families together and contributing to the economic stability of this keystone of the American system."

AFL AIDS WPB CAMPAIGN TO SALVAGE WASTE PAPER

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green assured the War Production Board full cooperation in the board's nation-wide campaign to salvage waste paper to remedy a critical shortage of raw material which has compelled many plants to shut down or curtail operations. The shortage is critical in cardboard containers used to package material for the armed forces. "Waste paper," the board said, "is one of the chief raw materials from which these containers are made."

JOHN J. LEARY IS DEAD; VETERAN LABOR REPORTER

Washington, D. C.—Labor leaders here were saddened by news of the death in Lynn, Mass., of John J. Leary, veteran labor reporter. Funeral services were held on Jan. 7 at St. Mary's Chapel, Lynn.

For many years, Mr. Leary served as Labor Editor of the New York World. His friends in the labor movement were legion. For the past few years he served in editorial capacities for the Operating Engineers and Bricklayers' Unions at their headquarters here.

FDR Proposal Will Not End Strikes, Green Declares In Statement

Washington, D. C.—President William Green expressed the American Federation of Labor's "complete" opposition to President Roosevelt's proposal for a "draft labor" law on the grounds that such legislation will not prevent strikes, will not solve manpower problems and threatens to "undermine our basic concepts of democracy."

Following this sweeping public declaration, Mr. Green wired every member of Congress urging defeat of the new and revolutionary proposal.

At the same time he called on all organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor to communicate their opposition to the plan to their Representatives and Senators in Congress.

The President's recommendation for a National Service Act was submitted to Congress in his annual message along with four other measures designed to curb rising price increases through Federal subsidies and to tax war profits more heavily.

Immediate reaction on Capitol Hill indicated that Congress would refuse to enact any portion of the President's recommendations except the ceiling with extension of the Economic Stabilization Act and confirming the profit renegotiation clause in the war law.

Virtually ignoring the President's message, the Senate proceeded with consideration of a tax bill, already approved by the House, which will fall far short of the goal set by Roosevelt. Members of Congress privately expressed the opinion that there was not the slightest chance of their voting drastic tax increases in an election year.

Also, there appeared to be little hope of Congress approving a substantial food subsidy program. The President asked for a billion-dollar program but unless there is a sudden shift of sentiment, Capitol Hill observers will cut the authorization to at least half that figure, if it approves subsidies at all.

The President emphasized in his message that his five-point program formed a "just and equitable whole" and added that he would not recommend that the National Service Act unless the other laws were passed to prevent undue profits, to keep down the cost of living and to hold the stabilization line.

Because of this proviso in his message, anti-Administration forces expressed the cynical belief that the President had advanced his program for political campaign purposes rather than in the expectation that it would be adopted. These spokesmen declared that if the President's recommendations are rejected he could replace the onus on Congress for failure in the home war economy.

At any rate, except for communist-controlled organizations, the trade union movement presented a solid front of opposition to the draft proposal, although, of course, it will support mere legislation to tax excessive war profits and to authorize a comprehensive subsidy program.

At a conference with President Roosevelt in the White House, Mr. Green made it clear that the Federation will not go along with him on a National Service Act.

Mr. Green pointed out in his public statement that although Great Britain has a National Service Act, the law has failed to stop strikes in that country. Britain has had more strikes, proportionately, than America, he said.

An economic fact such a law will not solve manpower problems, Mr. Green cited a recent report by the War Manpower Commission's Policy Committee, in which top representatives of industry, labor and agriculture unanimously held that "the American people will provide greater output under a voluntary system than under one of compulsion and regimentation."

Mr. Green quoted Bernard Baruch as saying that for the statement there can be no real comparison between drafting men for service in the armed forces and drafting men for service in private industry, operating for private profit.

The AFL chief emphasized that since the no-strike pledge was given to the President he has not approved, approved or condoned a single strike. The record shows, he added, that not a single national strike has been put into effect by any AFL affiliate since Pearl Harbor. When local strikes have occurred, Mr. Green said, AFL officials have exerted every influence to terminate them as quickly as possible.

The only National Service bill now before Congress is the Austin-Wadsworth Bill, which is thoroughly objectionable to labor. To make matters worse, the measure in its latest form revised it after the President's message to include a clause which would, in effect, destroy the closed shop.

GLASS PLANT WORKERS SELECT AFL AFFILIATE

New Martinsville, W. Va.—Production and maintenance employes of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.'s New Martinsville plant selected the AFL Chemical Workers Union as collective bargaining agency in an election held by the National Labor Relations Board. The employes cast 129 votes for the AFL union, 12 for District 50, United Mine Workers, and 15 for the CIO union.